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People With Lower Income More Likely to Have High Sodium Intake

A new study found that people in the lower economic class are more likely to consume more salt than people who belong to higher economic class.

BY **AMBER MOORE** | JAN 08, 2013 02:34 PM EST

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A new study from UK has found that people in the lower economic class are more likely to consume more salt than people who belong to higher economic class. Study authors say that the difference in salt intake might explain the prevalence of obesity, hypertension and renal failure in these people.

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The data for the study came from 2,105 men and women enrolled in the British National Diet and Nutrition Survey. Salt intake of the study participants was assessed using 7-day dietary

record and 24h urine collections for sodium determination. Researchers compared salt intake along with criteria like education levels and type of employment, both of which have a lasting effect on a person's health.

The study found a significant association between high salt intake and lower socioeconomic class.

"These results are important as they explain in part why people of low socio-economic background are more likely to develop high blood pressure (hypertension) and to suffer disproportionately from strokes, heart attacks and renal failure," said Professor Francesco Cappuccio, senior author and Director of the WHO Collaborating Centre.

According to Institute of Medicine, reducing salt intake alone can save up to 100,000 lives annually in the U.S.

IOM recommends a salt intake of less than 2,300 milligrams, that's about a teaspoon of table salt a day (including cooking and extra salt added to food).

"The diet of disadvantaged socio-economic groups tends to be made up of low-quality, salt-dense, high-fat, high-calorie unhealthy cheap foods," said Cappuccio in a news release. Policies aimed at reducing salt intake were associated with decrease in consumption of salt from 9.5g per day in 2004 to 8.1g per day in 2011. Study authors say that continued efforts will help bring down salt intake.

"Since the majority of dietary salt is added during commercial food production, widespread and continued food reformulation is necessary through both voluntary as well as regulatory means to make sure that salt reduction is achieved across all socio-economic groups", Professor Cappuccio concluded.



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The study was conducted by the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Nutrition and is published in the journal BMJ.

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